



SERIES: Philippians (May / June)

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Friday, May 14, 2021

Scripture: Philippians 1:23-24

TITLE: Finish Well

I love Christ - but I love my kids. I love Jesus - but I love my wife too. I love Christ - but I love my work here at Back to the Bible. I'm torn between my life and Christ. What about you? How are you torn? Is it between Christ and your family? Is it between Jesus and your pets? Is it between your career and God? Is it between your hobbies and your Savior? We are all torn, but usually, the battle shouldn't be so hard.

Paul, too had a battle between two desires: serving and going. Which one was better? The one that God willed. What do I mean by that? Let's keep listening to Paul as he wrestled with his desires in Philippians 1:

"I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. ²⁴ But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live." (Phil. 1:23-24, NLT)

Here we find a Paul under house arrest, chained to a guard 24 hours a day. He isn't out on the beach. He's not playing 36 holes of golf each day. He isn't even going to the office, churning out sermons and e-books. No, he's quarantining in Rome, while awaiting his trial. He's social distancing, while some pretentious preachers are out preaching Christ to get a rise out of Paul. Yet, his eyes aren't on the problem. His eyes are on Christ. He is earnestly struggling with knowing God's will. Should he be so focused on serving Christ, or preparing to die? Both service and death meant glorifying Christ.

Paul knew that death meant Paradise and reunion with Christ: No more pain, suffering, quarantining, social distancing, and the challenges of this world. Paul probably had moments of frustration. I mean, he was the church-planting king. He was the apostle of the apostles, and yet he is finishing up his time on Earth in chains, in quarantine. But he, as he said earlier, is making the most of it, and leading people to Christ. He's inspiring believers to live on purpose and for a purpose.

So he knows he's still serving a purpose despite great hurdles. But in his heart, he knows God isn't done with him yet. So, he's not going to coast. He's not going to sit back and read the next Stephen King novel, or binge-watch the latest Netflix series. He has determined to finish well for the sake of Christ.

So that's my challenge for you today: finish well. You may be 20, 40, 60, or 80. It doesn't matter. We all are torn between coasting and serving. We are torn between our will and God's will. We are all torn between selfish and selfless.

No matter what circumstances you face, don't settle. Don't coast. Live a life on purpose for our King. You may be quarantining. You may be restricted in what you can do, and who you can do it with - So was Paul. But Paul didn't have a smartphone, tablet, or computer. We all can live a life with Gospel intentionality. So that's what I want you to do today. Reach out to someone. Encourage them in the name of Christ. Share the Gospel with someone who is lost. Motivate someone to get moving again.

God's not finished with you yet. So know this, and go win the day.